LOWER HUDSON EDUCATION COALITION
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Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Re: Support for S6372/A7631 – Local Finance Law Amendments for Child Sexual Abuse Judgments

Dear Governor Hochul:

On behalf of the Lower Hudson Education Coalition (LHEC), which is a consortium of public-school districts in Dutchess, Rockland, Orange, Putnam, and Westchester counties educating nearly 300,000 students, I write in strong support of **S6372 (Mayer)/A7631 (Lunsford)**. This bill makes a narrowly tailored but critically important amendment to the Local Finance Law to help districts meet their moral and legal obligations to survivors of child sexual abuse while preserving educational opportunities for current and future students.

The Child Victims Act (CVA) and the lookback window under CPLR §214-g empowered survivors to seek justice for abuse that often-occurred decades ago. However, this change resulted in school districts facing large judgments or settlements without adequate, or any, insurance coverage that reaches back to the years in question. In some instances, insurers have disclaimed responsibility altogether. The result is that individual public school districts and BOCES can confront tens of millions of dollars in liability that must be paid from current operating budgets and local property taxes.

Under existing law, districts and BOCES may issue debt for up to fifteen years to finance the payment of judgments and settlements. That framework was not designed with the unique circumstances of CVA-related litigation in mind. When a district must absorb a very large, uninsured CVA judgment over such a relatively short period, the consequences can be severe: steep spikes in property taxes, sudden cuts to staff and programs, reductions in student supports, and long-term harm to the very children the State Constitution obligates us to serve. In extreme cases, the financial strain can raise questions about a district's long-term fiscal stability.

This legislation responds directly to this challenge. The bill amends the Local Finance Law to add a new subdivision authorizing school districts, BOCES, and special act school districts to treat judgments, compromised claims, or settled claims resulting from actions brought under CPLR §214-g as having a "probable usefulness" of up to thirty years**.** In practical terms, it doubles the maximum period over which these specific obligations may be financed. The underlying liability is not reduced, avoided, or forgiven; rather, districts are allowed to spread the cost over a longer horizon, aligning repayment more sensibly with their long-term mission and tax base.

For the Lower Hudson region, the stakes are especially clear and without the flexibility provided by S6372/A7631, a single large judgment can force a district into a zero-sum choice between honoring its obligations to survivors and maintaining core educational services for current students. That is not a choice the State should ask local boards to make.

For these reasons, the Lower Hudson Education Coalition respectfully and strongly urges you to sign **S6372/A7631** into law.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership on behalf of New York's students, families, and communities.